

Open Letter to Former Members of the NBC:

I'm 100% in favor of an NBC Alumni. I've been wondering how I'd be able to pick up the threads of friendship that were broken by the war, and also retain the new acquaintances made since 1941. An alumni organization is the perfect answer. Not only will an Alumni benefit us. I'm convinced that the NBC and its future members will benefit.

Keeping 600 boys busy playing the year around requires a great deal of planning---in some respects more than keeping 600 men busy working, because sports are seasonal, and boys are unpredictable. At the present time, all the work is being done by a very few men. And while they're doing a top-notch job, they'd be the first to admit that with some assistance the job could be done better.

It would be of great value to the kids, and would give a lift to the program if the chess meets were in the hands of outstanding players of the past, if the Memorial Day Track Meet were planned and conducted by men well-known for their skill in track, and so on through the entire list of NBC activities. If each alumnus would contribute his talent, the NBC would have a group of sports specialists that wouldn't be equalled in any boys' club anywhere.

I think that carrying out such a plan is right in line with an oft-expressed aim of the NBC---that the club should be a community enterprise.

It's certainly true that the community bounded by Kedzie, Montrose, Damen, and Addison Streets would suffer a great loss if the NBC were to go out of existence. And it's equally true that the life of the NBC would be ended if Mr. Buchler were to cease supporting it. I believe that the Alumni might be the means of assuring that the NBC would go on indefinitely, and would outlive our generation.

Right here I'd like to mention another idea. Many times, I've heard and read the statement, "We could never repay Mr. Buchler for all the swell times we had in the NBC." We all know how true those words are. Good times and life-long friendships can't be measured in terms of money. But even if we could repay him, he wouldn't accept. I've heard him say that he felt amply rewarded just by realizing the enjoyment that we had, and by the "better men" the NBC has produced, as is evidenced by its wartime record.

It seems to me that our relationship to him is similar to that of children toward their parents, in a sense. Neither can the children repay, nor do the parents expect it. So what do the children do? When they become parents, they try to do as much, or more, for their children as was done for them.

Why shouldn't the NBC Alumni adopt the same practice? Why not repay the "debt" each and every one of us feels he owes Mr. Buchler by giving the same opportunities we had, to succeeding generations of boys who will live in the community where we spent our boyhood.

If each of the more than 1,500 men who have "graduated" from the Boys' Club would offer his talents, and in addition would tax himself a small sum once a year, we would be prepared to take up the responsibility and the financial reins whenever Mr. Buchler might desire or be forced to drop them.

The most important element of such a plan would be its start. As time went on, and each year brought a new group of alumni, there would be more and more men to help carry the load. But it's at the very beginning where whole-hearted cooperation will be vital. Right now, as the national emergency draws to a close, we have the opportunity to get together and make such a plan work. It will be the only time opportunity will knock. If we don't form an Alumni now, we'll lose a wonderful chance to better ourselves and the club.

The thoughts I have mentioned need not be put into action immediately, but once the alumni is organized, we can, and should, act on them. Therefore I say, "Let's start an Alumni right now!"

Ray "Skip" Baumhart

Ens. Ray Baumhart  
U.S.S. President Polk (AP 103)  
c/o FPO  
San Francisco, California